

---

This is the **published version** of the bachelor thesis:

López Garrido, Ramon; Reeves, Alan Davidson, dir. Learning English Tenses through Spanish Grammar : When Using the L1 Benefits ESL Learning. 2016. 27 pag. (997 Grau en Estudis d'Anglès i de Francès)

---

This version is available at <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/165199>

under the terms of the  license

**Learning English Tenses through Spanish Grammar:  
When Using the L1 Benefits ESL Learning**

**TREBALL DE FI DE GRAU**

**Grau en Estudis Anglesos**

**Departament de Filologia Anglesa i Germanística**

Supervisor: Dr Alan Reeves

Ramon López Garrido

16<sup>th</sup> June 2016

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me with this research. My TFG supervisor, Alan Reeves, for all the guidance, advice and support he has given to my project. Also, my sister Sandra, my former English teachers Isabel Vicente and Rosa Gamisans, and their students who participated in my experiment at Institut Quercus in Sant Joan de Vilatorrada, as well as my own students, with whom I have been able to develop my teaching skills and put my method into practice, especially Gemma, Txell and Daniel.

## Table of contents

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Abstract.....                   | 1  |
| 1. Introduction .....           | 2  |
| 2. Methodology.....             | 7  |
| 2.1 Data Analysis .....         | 9  |
| 3. Results .....                | 11 |
| 4. Discussion.....              | 12 |
| 5. Feedback from Students ..... | 13 |
| 6. Conclusion.....              | 16 |
| 7. Resources .....              | 17 |
| Appendix A .....                | 19 |
| Appendix B .....                | 20 |
| Appendix C .....                | 21 |
| Appendix D.....                 | 22 |
| Appendix E .....                | 23 |
| Appendix F .....                | 24 |

## **Abstract**

The current teaching trend of ESL is focused on maximizing the use of the L2 so that the student learns the language through linguistic immersion. This approach leaves the L1 out of the game, even though research has shown it can also be beneficial for the learner. My research intends to demonstrate that translation of English grammar tenses into Spanish can be a helpful way of assimilating English grammar more easily and faster, especially for those students with a poor command of English. An experiment which compares two different teaching methods, labelled as Uses and Translation, was carried out with 2 groups of 10 high school students. Both methods aim for students to master English verb tenses, but the former does it through the learning of their uses in English, while the latter approaches these tenses through their structural correspondence in Spanish.

## 1. Introduction

The use of Language 1 (L1) in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) is often judged as negative for the learner. The current teaching trend generally accepts that the more the students are required to think and interact in English in the classroom, the more they learn. However, for a very long time, translation used to be the main teaching trend in second language learning. Based upon Latin and Ancient Greek translation, this technique was widely accepted as the most effective method up until the 1950s. From that moment on, however, its popularity decayed until its utter rejection during the 1960s, when Language 2 (L2) started to claim its position in Foreign Language (FL) teaching (Scott and De la Fuente, 2008: 101). Criticism towards the translation method pointed mainly at the fact that it mostly focused the learning of a second language on reading and writing skills, completely disregarding the need of the learner to learn how to communicate orally (Benati, 2013: 12). This led to embracing an extremely opposite approach, which left the L1 out of the learning game and placed the L2 in the spotlight. The new learning goal was labeled as acquisition, which intended to mirror the process children undergo when they learn their mother tongues. In order to achieve this, a complete immersion into the Target Language (TL) is required, thus leaving the L1 in a detrimental role within FL learning.

Nevertheless, producing bilinguals is the main target when teaching a foreign language. By definition, a bilingual person should be capable of commanding both languages, thus being aware of the relationship between both. This bad reputation L1 earned in the teaching field led to second language learning to be “treated unidimensionally”, as if there were two separate spheres of knowledge which do not interact with each other (Koda, 1993: 490). Research has proved, however, that when learners work with a foreign language, they try to look for “interlingual identifications” between both languages in contact (Weinreich, 1953, cited in Selinker, 1972: 33). When a learner of a foreign language engages with the L2,

there is “a *psychological structure* that is *latent* in the brain” (Selinker, 1972: 33) which activates when the learner tries to use the L2. This attempt to produce a rule in the TL does not happen neither in the native language nor in the language the speaker is trying to learn, but rather in a different linguistic system which Selinker (1972: 35) coined as “interlanguage (IL)”. Within this system, learners produce two types of errors: *Transfer Errors*, due to a perception of similarity with the L1, and *Overgeneralizations*, due to a perception of similarity within the L2. By contrast, these two processes also have a positive version which would result in learning. Research has even shown the benefits of watching movies in the L2 with subtitles in the learner's native language, which proves this latent structure is capable of recognizing the similarities in the TL and thus act positively towards the internalization of the foreign structure (Ghia, 2012). The perception of similarity is clearly fundamental to learning processes, a concept which forms the basis of the argument which is developed in this paper.

If this natural process is stopped, learners are being hindered from an arguably faster way of mastering the TL. A complete polarization of L1 and L2 might turn out to be counter-productive for the learner, as Scott and De la Fuente (2008) showed in their study, which focused on examining how English speaking students of Spanish and French used their L1 in order to solve grammar exercises in pairs. Some of the students were required to speak only in the foreign language, while others were allowed to use their L1. The results showed how interaction between students was drastically reduced when the pair needed to work together on the grammar exercise in Spanish or French. They all admitted following their native language instincts in order to solve the exercise by translating, but those who were required to use the L2 admitted frustration for not being able to explain their thoughts despite knowing how to express it in English, which proved the methodology was not effective. Scott and De la Fuente (2008: 110) noted that “two languages function in tandem to complete a consciousness-raising task” and forbidding the use of the L1 makes “their two languages

compete, causing frustration and cognitive strain”. They underline the importance of not using the L1 randomly, but they conclude that banning it seems to stop “natural and spontaneous cognitive processes that support L2 learning”, making it harder for the learner to succeed.

This natural tendency to use L1 is key in order to understand the significance of L1 within L2 acquisition. It is undeniable that exclusive use of L2 is a task which requires an extra effort for learners which not all students are ready to successfully fulfill. Disregarding the potential of L1 will thus be detrimental to those students in need of a linguistic base to support their learning of English, because the choice of the language of thought is not deliberate, but unconscious. Despite the efforts in making students think and work with the TL, students very often will resort to their native language even if they are not fully aware of it. This lack of awareness of the benefits of “selective translation into the native language may play (...) in the comprehension, retention, and production of written texts” (Cohen, 1998: 156) shows one of the weaknesses of the L2 immersion method: it discriminates against those students with a lower level of English, blocking their natural language resources and only allowing the more advanced students who are able to process their thoughts in English to succeed.

The main fear about the influence of L1 in FL learning is that it may lead to making mistakes and miscomprehension due to “negative transfer” (Cohen, 1998: 185), assuming that working directly in the L2 will result in a better performance. Nonetheless, translation is a technique which can be mastered with practice. The role of the teacher is essential here, because they will be the ones stressing what areas of the TL can successfully be translated, so that the students know in which cases the technique should be used or not. Therefore, “bringing the L1 back from exile... may liberate the task-based learning approach so that it can foster the students' natural collaborative efforts in the classroom through their L1 as well



as their L2” (Cook, 2001, cited in Scott and De la Fuente, 2008: 103). It is essential that L1 and L2 are understood as having “distinctive and complementary purposes” (Cohen, 1998: 162) rather than being a competition between languages which trample upon each other.

Malmkjær (1998) deals with a long list of authors who discuss the issues presented by translation in language teaching and very effectively refutes their objections. In her counter-arguments, she defends the usage of L1 as a natural technique which allows learners to develop other language skills. She also interprets interference between languages as a positive sign in order to create “awareness and control” (Malmkjær, 1998: 6) of language command. Nevertheless, translation is imperfect, and thus it is essential to be aware of its limitations and practice in order to use it properly so that it provides beneficial learning outcomes. Both this present research and Malmkjær's (1998) coincide in highlighting that this method is not an irrefutable way of mastering English, but rather a helpful technique which is intended to “be used as one among several methods of actually *teaching* language, rather than as mere preparation for an examination” (Malmkjær, 1998: 7).

The use of translation can be particularly helpful for ESL students when applied to grammar tenses learning. While immersion in the language might suffice for the students with a higher command of English, other learners find themselves incapable of mastering the grammatical base of the language. The difficulties they find in learning the use and formation of tenses are often carried all throughout high school years, despite being taught the exact same tenses year after year. This weak grammar basis hinders their learning of the language, which they interpret as an obstacle on their school curriculum rather than a tool for their future. I believe the estrangement they feel towards the language would be easier to overcome if they were introduced to it with the similarities their L1 shares with English. In this particular case, grammar tenses in English often share a very similar structure with Spanish. It is the case, for instance, of the Present Continuous:

(1) I am playing.

(2) Yo estoy jugando.

Even though this correspondence between *to be* and the *gerund* for the formation of this tense both in English and Spanish might seem obvious, it is often overlooked or not explicitly stated. If students are made aware of the connection between their L1 and the target language, the learning process happens more smoothly than if they are left alone in an unknown linguistic territory with no weapons to battle against their own personal difficulties. The territory both English and Spanish share in terms of grammar tenses is very wide and mostly unknown by ESL students, and awareness of this common ground between L1 and L2 might be key for their understanding of English grammar.

The current methodology used within the Catalan high-school system not only seems to ignore the special educational needs of lower level students, but also fails to provide more advanced students with the necessary skills in order to achieve a good command of English. The core issue lies in the basis of the curriculum and learning goals. Grammar, applied in exercises like completing fill-in-the-blank texts, is given an excessive amount of teaching time. The insistence on the same grammar concepts and the same verb tenses during years takes a lot of class time. As a consequence, learners of ESL are prevented from achieving a decent level in real life skills such as speaking and oral comprehension, while writing tends not to benefit much from it either. If more time was invested on real-life communicative situations, the learning outcomes would be much more satisfactory. However, the system is stuck for too long on the type of grammar exercises which are built artificially and do not simulate real-life situations. An earlier proper acquisition of verb tenses would allow teachers to move on to more linguistically enriching activities, but the problem comes with the lack of ability the students have when it comes to learning the basic grammar concepts. This forces teachers to repeat the same grammar tenses year after year to the same group of students who

will be divided between those who already understood and those who are unable—or unwilling—to learn it. For the learners who have already mastered it, that will mean wasting precious class time which they could be investing in improving other areas of their knowledge; for those who did not, it will be another chance which they will most likely decide to let go due to the frustration they feel because of being incapable of connecting with English.

It seems reasonable to assume, then, that the grammar tense translation method would be helpful in order to assist students in their understanding of the grammar base which deters their further language improvement. By focusing on the particular case of ESL being taught to Spanish speakers within the Catalan high school system, the aim of this research will be to investigate whether it is possible to use L1 as a tool to master English grammar tenses, especially for students with difficulties. Even though not all tenses fully coincide, there is a clear similarity between the grammar structure of most of them in English and in Spanish. Taking advantage of the traits these two languages share earlier in the high school learning period would allow learners to boost their performance in areas where grammar is applied rather than simulated; that is, by investing less time, but more efficiently, on grammar teaching, other areas such as oral production, oral comprehension or writing will achieve a much stronger learning success.

## **2. Methodology**

Two groups of 10 students from the public high school Institut Quercus in Sant Joan de Vilatorrada were selected to participate in the experiment according to their level of English. Their teachers chose students who reportedly have difficulties with English and whose grades were between 3 and 5 out of 10. Both groups of students, which included both boys and girls equally, were given a set of exercises which was divided in 5 parts.

In the first part, there were 9 sentences in which they were asked to fill in a blank (see Appendix A). Each blank corresponded to a different verb tense among the following: Present Simple, Present Continuous, Past Simple, Past Continuous, Present Perfect Simple, Present Perfect Continuous, Past Perfect Simple, Past Perfect Continuous and Future Simple. Together with the sentence in English, a translation of the whole sentence in Spanish, with the verb left in infinitive form, was provided in order to focus on verb tenses only, without interference from possible mistakes due to a misunderstanding of the sentence content.

After Part 1 was completed, both groups were instructed on different methods to solve grammar exercises such as the one they had just done. One of the groups was taught following the Uses method, while the other was given instruction with the verb tense Translation method (see Appendixes B and C for more examples). The former method contrasts the verb tenses in order to find their right context:

Teacher: "The Present Simple is used for habits and routines. For instance, *I go to the gym every day*. Does that make sense?"

Students: "Yes."

Teacher: "On the other hand, the Present Continuous is used for actions happening at the moment of speaking. For example, *I'm going to the gym right now*. Can you see the difference?"

On the other hand, the Translation method stresses the similarities between verb structure in English and Spanish:

Teacher: "The Present Continuous is formed with the verb *to be* in the present and a gerund. If we take the verb *play*, which in Spanish means..."

Student: "*Jugar*."

Teacher: "That's right. In the Present Continuous, it would be *I am playing*. How does *I am* translate into Spanish?"

Student: "*Yo estoy*."

Teacher: "Exactly. The gerund in Spanish is *jugando*, so remember you need to translate the *-ing* for an *-ndo* ending. As you can see, *I am playing* fully coincides in its formation with the Spanish *Yo estoy jugando*."

In order to compensate for the large amount of information they were asked to process in so little time, they were allowed to take notes which they would be able to use when completing the following exercises.

Part 3 contained the same sentences that appeared in Part 1, with the objective of seeing whether the instruction provided in Part 2 helped the students improve or not. Furthermore, 9 new sentences were added in Part 4 to check if students could apply their knowledge in a different context (see Appendix D). Finally, in part 5 the students were asked to reflect on the experience by comparing the method they had been taught during the experiment with the one they usually used when they faced a fill-in-the-blanks exercise (see Appendix E).

## **2.1 Data Analysis**

The results were calculated following a points system based on improvement, taking into account whether the answer in Part 1 was correct or not. Also, the gathering of results was made focusing on tenses and not on the global results of each subject; that is, focusing on how much each method helped in each particular tense.

If someone had a wrong answer on Part 1, the one prior to instruction, getting it right in Parts 3 and 4 counted as 2 improvement points, while wrong answers did not take points off. For example, if the expected answer was a Past Continuous (PC in Tables 1 and 2), such as *was watching* (+), and Part 1 was answered with a Past Simple, such as *watched* (-), answering with a Past Continuous (+) in the following two exercises awarded 2 points because there had been an improvement from Part 1. Partly-good answers—that is, when there was an improvement, but still not a fully correct answer—counted as 1 point. An example for this would be an answer which used a Present Perfect Simple, such as *have watched* (~), when the expected answer was a Present Perfect Continuous, such as *have been*

*watching* (+), but always taking into account if the answer given was acceptable within the context of the sentence. This is illustrated in the following box:

| If PC1 = | PC2 / PC3 | Grading |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| -        | +         | +2      |
|          | -         | 0       |
|          | ~         | +1      |

Table 1. Grading system with a wrong answer on Part 1 for the Past Continuous (PC).

On the other hand, if the subject got the first answer right in Part 1 when a Present Simple (+) was expected, a Present Simple (+) in Parts 3 and 4 only counted as 1 point. In this case, wrong answers, such as a Past Simple (-), took 1 point off, since they did not only not show improvement, but a worsening performance. Partly-correct answers (~) did not give or take off any points (see Appendix F for an example of the correction method). The following box shows the grading system for this case:

| If PC1 = | PC2 / PC3 | Grading |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| +        | +         | +1      |
|          | -         | -1      |
|          | ~         | 0       |

Table 2. Grading system with a correct answer on Part 1 for the Past Continuous (PC).

### 3. Results

If tenses are analyzed separately, a better tendency for improvement with the translation method can be observed in all tenses, even though the difference appears more sharply in four particular tenses: Present Simple (with a +6 points difference), Present Continuous (+9), Past Simple (+9) and Past Perfect Simple (+7).

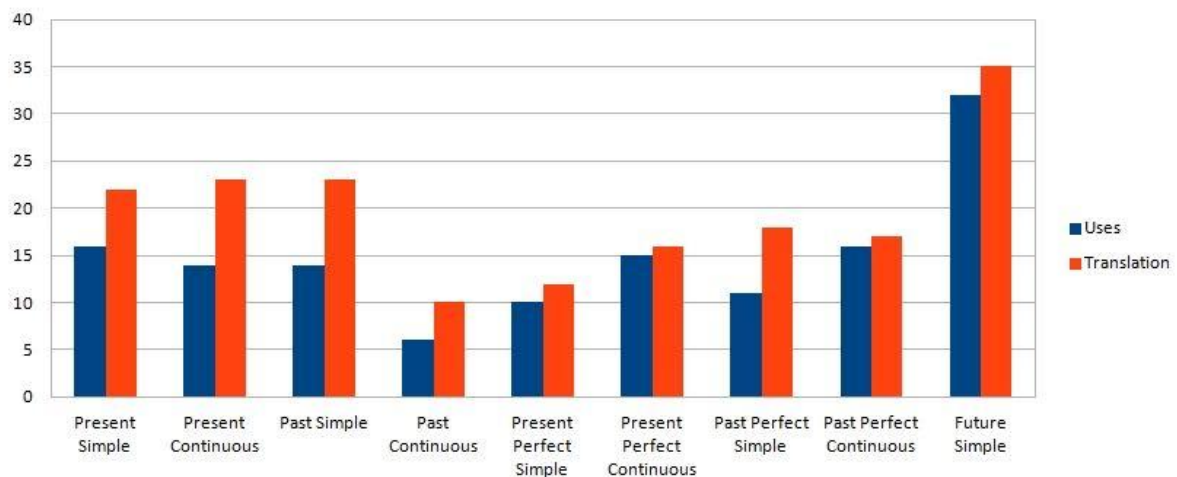


Chart 1. Improvement by tense comparing Uses and Translation methods.

The overall results in the following chart show the average improvement for the two different groups, Uses and Translation. They were calculated out of a maximum of 40 points:

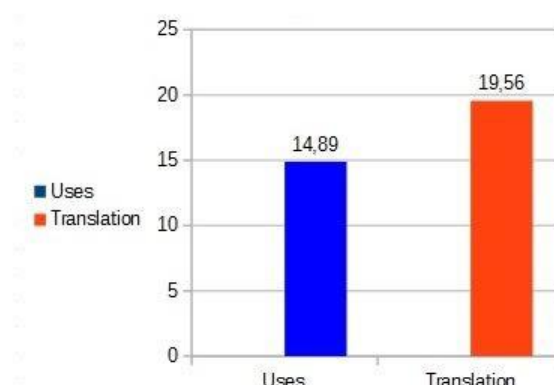


Chart 2. Average improvement of Uses and Translation.

The result of a Paired *t* test is considered to be significant at  $p < 0.05$ . In the present study, the P value of the two groups is 0.0024, which makes the difference between the outcome of the two groups statistically significant.

#### **4. Discussion**

The results clearly indicate, at least in the context of this small scale experiment, that translation appears to help students improve more than the Uses method. Contrary to common methodological practice, the use of translation, at least in the case of verb tenses, can be a useful addition to the teaching procedure. Although it is not possible to make claims about the long term retention of the instruction, in view of the large amount of information students had to assimilate, it is possible that improvements would have been greater if the experiment had extended over a longer period.

Correct answers, however, are not the only significant sources to be analyzed. By taking a closer look at the wrong answers, a different pattern can be observed in the mistakes made by the students taught with the Uses method and those by the Translation method group. With the Translation method, students tend to give wrong answers which are close to the right one. For instance, they show a greater tendency towards using the progressive tense in the Past Continuous. Within the wrong answers made by the Uses group, only 4 used an *-ing* form, while 7 people recognized the need for a gerund in that same context with the Translation method. Thus, by making a connection with Spanish, they are able to recognize the progressive part of the verb tense more easily than those who only have the Uses information. Therefore, a lack of awareness of the verb form in Spanish seems to be negative for the students' performance.

Furthermore, the answers provided by students taught with the Translation method appear to be more uniform. That is, people make the same type of mistakes, which shows a



simpler thought process when translation from Spanish is used. For instance, within the Present Perfect Simple answers for Part 3, 6 students from the Translation group provided the same wrong answer, which was a Present Simple. On the other hand, the answers given by the Uses method group are more random, since there are 7 different wrong answers from 7 different students. This pattern, which repeats itself in other tenses, shows how, in spite of departing from the same starting point, students reach different wrong conclusions with the Uses method. The uniformity presented by the Translation method students seems to bring the students closer to success; the fact that the mental process they follow leads them to a similar outcome suggests it is easier for them to elaborate an answer through their native language rather than through a language they do not command. Also, from a teaching point of view, correcting a general mistake is easier if everybody starts from the same point, while trying to tackle the understanding problem by exploring the mental path each individual has followed in order to reach their conclusion is a highly unrealistic goal.

Nevertheless, the results for the Uses group are not entirely unsuccessful. The outcome of the Uses students is virtually the same as that of the Translation ones in many of the tenses. For instance, the mistakes made by both groups in the Present Perfect Continuous are very close to the right tense, although differently. The Translation group tends to provide a Present Perfect Simple answer, while in this case the Uses group recognizes the progressive form of the tense much more easily than the others. These very close results ratify the validity of both methods, suggesting that finding the right balance between them might be the key to a better performance by students with difficulties.

## **5. Feedback from Students**

Nunan (1992: 94) highlights the importance of receiving feedback from students in order to understand their cognitive processes when solving grammar exercises. His method of

stimulated recall provides useful data on how the subjects make decisions and how that affects their performance. This suggests that, when analyzing the effectiveness of a teaching method, it is essential to contrast the results with the actual thoughts of the students, so that is why a reflection section was included in the present study.

When in Part 5 of the experiment the students were asked to reflect on their methodology for solving exercises prior to receiving instruction, they mostly admitted not following any specific strategy or trying to guess whether it was present, past or future by looking for hints in the sentences. This means they all generally tried to apply the Uses method, but the students who were taught the translation method said they found it very useful and simpler than the one they previously knew. Only one student out of 20 admitted using translation as the previous strategy. On the other hand, when asked whether they would continue to use the theory they had been provided with, both the students in the Uses and the Translation group said they would, with only one student in the Translation group saying “maybe” and another one on the Uses group directly saying “no”.

Even though the Translation method proved to be effective in the experiment, it can result in even greater success if the students are exposed to it for longer. Three students (A, B and C) , with whom the translation methodology was put into practice, have been tutored by the present writer. In less than a year, all of them have experienced great improvements in their command of English, which has had an impact on their grades. They were interviewed in order to receive feedback on how their relationship with English has changed since they started applying the Translation method with grammar tenses.

Prior to learning the correspondence between Spanish and English grammar, the three students felt completely lost in English class. Without their having a good basis overall, especially because of a lack of vocabulary, following a grammar class was extremely

confusing for them. They felt confusion and frustration when they were asked to think in English, causing them to be insecure in their answers and overthink them. Student A explains how that made her feel like she was a disaster and not good enough for English. This led her to comparing herself with her classmates who were able to understand it, making her feel inferior to them, a sensation students B and C experienced as well. Student B adds how she would ask more advanced students how they managed to understand grammar exercises, and they would tell her they translated. However, since she had been told that thinking in English was the right way to do it, while using L1 was forbidden, she did not dare to do it: “If the teacher tells you you need to work with the Uses, you believe it and do it even though it doesn't work out for you”.

Once they were taught the Translation method, however, their attitude towards English changed for the better. They all agree on how Translation is a much easier way to learn grammar tenses than the Uses are. Relying on their L1 provided them with a boost of self-confidence which helped them lessen their struggle with fill-in-the-blanks exercises. Student C explains how he now deals with grammar exercises by first trying to decipher the general meaning of the sentence and then internally arguing in his L1 in order to find the right verb tense. For instance, he relates *haber* in Spanish with the Perfect tense; he knows that every time he thinks of an inflection of *haber*, he needs to use one of the Perfect tenses with *have*. Similarly, Student B thinks that using the L1 tells you when you need to use the tenses in English, while she strongly asserts that the Uses method is useless by itself. While Students A and B believe the Translation method to be almost perfect, Student C admits it is not always straightforward. He illustrates this with the example of the Passives from the Indirect Object, which do not exist in Spanish. However, he learned how to accept such a structure in his head through translation; that is, he translated “He was given flowers” for “Él

fue dado flores”, creating a grammatically acceptable sentence which allowed him to work in English with an unknown structure in his L1.

Furthermore, the improvement they experienced in their command of grammar helped them with their English course overall. Student A, who believes she will need to keep using the Translation method until she achieves a high command of the language, went up from 5/10 to a final grade of 7/10. Student B had always been on the very limit of passing or failing, but by the end of the year she got a final 8/10, which she totally attributes to how easily she understood and internalized the Translation method. Student C, who used to fail with a 2/10, did not believe himself to be capable of passing in less than a year. Not only did he finally pass, but also he acknowledges that his understanding of grammar allowed him to improve in other areas as well. Thanks to it, he can now produce a text in English by thinking first in his L1, or understand texts he reads better than before. His oral comprehension improved as well and, while he used to be unable to understand whether someone was asking him to do something or they had already done it themselves, he can now more easily distinguish if someone is telling him about a present, past or future action, a basic communication skill which he did not have before.

## **6. Conclusion**

As previous studies have shown, translation is a natural tendency which FL learners resort to when dealing with an L2. This research adds a new positive layer to this phenomenon, since it appears to be beneficial for the learning outcome of students. Furthermore, students who use the Translation method seem to follow a simpler path in their mental processes which makes English grammar easier to command.

There are reasons to believe, therefore, that banning the use of L1 hinders both the learner and the class group. Using a simpler, more effective method would allow students to

achieve a good command of the grammar basis earlier, indirectly benefiting them in other areas of English and leaving room for more class time to be used to actually teach students how to use the language as a useful tool in their lives, instead of eternally filling-in blanks. This would help overcome one of the weakest points of the current teaching trend in the Catalan high school system, which is the poor communication skills students finish their high school period with.

Nevertheless, instruction based on verb tense uses should not be dismissed, since they definitely differ to a certain extent with those of the corresponding tenses in Spanish, and translation could be misleading if these differences are not taken into consideration. However, students seem to find difficulties in understanding them without a connection with their L1, so incorporating the translation of verb tenses should be the first step in order to approach the uses in English. Teaching English through similarities instead of forcing an abstract approach lessens the students' anxiety and creates a more comfortable learning environment.

This study could contribute to future research on this topic, since it leaves many open questions to be investigated. The natural inclination towards translating might be a reasonable explanation for the fact that the more languages you know, the easier it is to learn a new one, since there are more structures to find similarities with. Also, further investigation could be carried out on how different methods imply simpler or more complex thought processes.

## **7. Resources**

- Benati, Alessandro G.. (2013). *Issues in Second Language Teaching*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing.
- Braidi, Susan M.. (1999). *The Acquisition of Second Language Syntax*. London: Arnold Publishers.
- Cohen, Andrew D.. (1998). *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc..

- Ghia, Elisa. (2012). *Subtitling Matters: New Perspectives on Subtitling and Foreign Language Learning*. Bern: Peter Lang AG.
- Koda, Keiko. (1993). Transferred L1 Strategies and L2 Syntactic Structure in L2 Sentence Comprehension. *The Modern Language Journal*, 77 (4): 490-500.
- Malmkjær, Kristen. (1998). Introduction: Translation and Language Teaching. In K. Malmkjær (Ed.), *Translation and Language teaching* (1-11). Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Nunan, David. (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Victoria: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, Virginia M. and De la Fuente, María José. (2008). What's the Problem? L2 Learners's Use of the L1 during Consciousness-Raising, Form-Focused Tasks. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92 (1): 100-113.
- Selinker, Larry. (1972). Interlanguage. In Jack C. Richards (Ed.), *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition* (31-54). Essex: Longman.
- Wong, M., Gil, K., Mardsden, H.. (2013). *Universal Grammar and the Second Language Classroom*. Dordrecht: Springer.

## Appendix A

1. I think it \_\_\_\_\_ (to rain) a lot tomorrow.

Creo que mañana (llover) mucho.

2. My parents currently \_\_\_\_\_ (to drive) 100km every day.

Mis padres actualmente (conducir) 100km cada día.

3. I'm tired because I \_\_\_\_\_ (to do) my homework for 2 hours.

Estoy cansado porque yo (hacer) deberes durante dos horas.

4. I checked if I \_\_\_\_\_ (to close) the window before I left.

Comprobé si yo (cerrar) la ventana antes de irme.

5. I can't help you now, I \_\_\_\_\_ (to watch) a movie.

No puedo ayudarte ahora, yo (ver) una película.

6. The man \_\_\_\_\_ (to kill) his neighbor two months ago.

El hombre (matar) a su vecino hace dos meses.

7. I \_\_\_\_\_ (to collect) 500 different types of insects since 1999.

Yo (coleccionar) 500 tipos distintos de insectos desde 1999.

8. I was busy because I \_\_\_\_\_ (to clean) my bedroom.

Yo estaba ocupado porque yo (limpiar) mi habitación.

9. When you finally arrived, I \_\_\_\_\_ (to call) you for 3 hours.

Cuando finalmente llegaste, yo te (llamar) durante dos horas.

## Appendix B

**Infinitive:** *play*

**Gerund:** *playing*

**Past Participle:** *played* (regular form)

- Use the **Present Simple** for habits and routines in the present. *I play*
- Use the **Present Continuous** for actions happening right at the moment of speaking. *I am playing*
- Use the **Past Simple** for finished actions in the past. *I played* (regular form)
- Use the **Past Continuous** for actions that were in progress in the past. *I was playing*
- Use the **Present Perfect Simple** for actions that started in the past but continue in the present. *I have played* / Use the **Present Perfect Continuous** when you want to specify the importance of the duration of the action. *I have been playing*
- Use the **Past Perfect** when there are two actions in the past and one happened before the other. *I had played* / Use the **Past Perfect Continuous** when you want to specify the importance of the duration of the action. *I had been playing*
- Use the **Future Simple** for predictions about the future or future decisions at the moment of speaking. *I will play*



## Appendix C

**Infinitive/Infinitivo:** *play* → *jugar*

**Gerund/Gerundio:** *playing* → *jugando*

**Past Participle/Participio:** *played* (regular form) → *jugado*

· **Present Simple.** *I play* → *Yo juego*

· **Present Continuous.** *I am playing* → *Yo estoy jugando*

· **Past Simple.** *I played* (regular form) → *Yo jugué*

· **Past Continuous.** *I was playing* → *Yo estaba jugando*

· **Present Perfect Simple.** *I have played* → *Yo he jugado*

· **Present Perfect Continuous.** *I have been playing* → *Yo he estado jugando*

· **Past Perfect.** *I had played* → *Yo había jugado*

· **Past Perfect Continuous.** *I had been playing* → *Yo había estado jugando*

· **Future Simple.** *I will play* → *Yo jugaré*

## Appendix D

1. When I told her, she already knew because she \_\_\_\_\_ (to watch) the news.

Cuando se lo conté, ella ya lo sabía porque ella (ver) las noticias.

2. We \_\_\_\_\_ (to make) a lot of noise right now, the neighbors are going to complain.

Nosotros (hacer) mucho ruido ahora mismo, los vecinos se van a quejar.

3. Your aunt \_\_\_\_\_ (to visit) me yesterday.

Tu tía me (visitar) ayer.

4. I \_\_\_\_\_ (to make) lots of friends since I moved to this city.

Yo (hacer) muchos amigos desde que me trasladé a esta ciudad.

5. I \_\_\_\_\_ (to eat) at the restaurant last night when I saw your brother.

Yo (comer) en el restaurante ayer por la noche cuando vi a tu hermano.

6. I've just decided I \_\_\_\_\_ (to buy) a new phone.

Acabo de decidir que (comprar) un móvil nuevo.

7. When I woke up, my mum yelled at me because I \_\_\_\_\_ (to sleep) all morning.

Cuando me desperté, mi madre me regañó porque yo (dormir) durante toda la mañana.

8. I never \_\_\_\_\_ (to watch) TV at night because I go to sleep early.

Yo nunca (ver) la tele por la noche porque me voy a dormir pronto.

9. I'm exhausted! I \_\_\_\_\_ (to run) for 2 hours straight.

Estoy agotado! Yo (correr) durante dos horas seguidas.

## **Appendix E**

28. Did you find the explanation of the teacher was useful for you to complete Parts 3 and 4?

Why?

29. When you have to solve this type of exercises by yourself, like you did in Part 1, do you use a strategy which is similar or different to the one you were presented in Part 2? Please explain the mental process you usually follow.

30. Do you think you'll continue to use the given strategy from now on?

## Appendix F

| Student | Present C.1<br><i>am watching</i> | Present C. 2<br><i>am watching</i> | Present C. 3<br><i>are making</i> | Grading |     |     |
|---------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|-----|-----|
|         |                                   |                                    |                                   | PC1     | PC2 | PC3 |
| 1       | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | making                            | +       | +   | -   |
| 2       | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                                 | +       | +   | +   |
| 3       | watched                           | will watch                         | ✓                                 | -       | -   | +   |
| 4       | watched                           | ✓                                  | had been maked                    | -       | +   | -   |
| 5       | watching                          | ✓                                  | making                            | -       | +   | -   |
| 6       | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                                 | +       | +   | +   |
| 7       | am watch                          | will watch                         | ✓                                 | -       | -   | +   |
| 8       | am watch                          | am watch                           | are make                          | -       | -   | -   |
| 9       | am watch                          | will watch                         | ✓                                 | -       | -   | +   |
| 10      | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | was making                        | +       | +   | -   |
| 11      | will watch                        | ✓                                  | ✓                                 | -       | +   | +   |
| 12      | watching                          | ✓                                  | are make                          | -       | +   | -   |
| 13      | am watch                          | ✓                                  | was making                        | -       | +   | -   |
| 14      | -                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                                 | -       | +   | +   |
| 15      | watching                          | ✓                                  | making                            | -       | +   | -   |
| 16      | watching                          | watching                           | to maked                          | -       | -   | -   |
| 17      | watching                          | ✓                                  | were making                       | -       | +   | -   |
| 18      | am watch                          | will watch                         | have been making                  | -       | -   | ~   |
| 19      | watching                          | ✓                                  | ✓                                 | -       | +   | +   |
| 20      | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                                 | +       | +   | +   |

Table 3. Example of the grading of a tense.